

who are here for the first time, I am very grateful.

I'm not running for anything. I'm here because I believe in what we've done, and I know there's a lot more to do, not only in the 2 years I have remaining on my term but in the years ahead. And this country needs to be led from a dynamic, vital center, rooted in a concern for these basic ideas, not the politics of left and right but how to get opportunity to every responsible citizen and how to build a genuine sense of community in which we care for other people because it is morally right to do, but we also are smart enough to understand that we'll all do better if other Americans do better. That unleashes a flood of good ideas. And if you can only get half of them done, the country is in a much better place.

So when I look back on the last 6 years, when I look to the next 2 years, when I look ahead to the next 10 years, I believe the philosophy we have brought to America is the right one. And I believe our country would be better served if we had more people who believed in it and worked for it every day. That's why I'm here supporting Joe and Beth and Loretta and Roy and Andy and all of our fine team because I believe that with all my heart.

And if you believe that this is a better country in the last 6 years, I appreciate it if you think that I had something to do with it. But I was the instrument of the ideas that, when implemented, made America a better place. And we need more people who can carry those ideas and have the ability to implement them.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:22 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Father William L. George, assistant to the president of Georgetown University for Federal relations; dinner hosts Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr., and his wife, Barbara; Patricia Kluge, president, Kluge Investments; Corinne Claiborne (Lindy) Boggs, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See; Commissioner of Labor Michael L. Thurmond and State Attorney General Thurbert E. Baker of Georgia; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy; Prime

Minister Wim Kok of The Netherlands; Bob Chase, president, National Education Association; and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Representative Loretta Sanchez, general cochair, former Governor Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, and Andy Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks Following a Meeting With a Congressional Delegation and an Exchange With Reporters

April 28, 1999

Situation in the Balkans

The President. Good afternoon. I just had a good meeting with a large bipartisan delegation from both Houses of Congress on Kosovo. It was our fourth meeting since the airstrikes began. We spoke about the NATO Summit, its unity and determination to achieve our objectives in Kosovo; about the progress of our military campaign and the intensification of economic sanctions; about the humanitarian challenge that we face and the work that we and our Allies are doing to meet it.

Just on Monday, some 3,500 Kosovar refugees, in trains and buses, arrived in Montenegro. Yesterday about 5,000 entered Macedonia; almost 3,000 arrived in Albania, exhausted, hungry, shaken, all by the violence and abuse they experienced on the way. At one point, 1.8 million ethnic Albanians lived in Kosovo. Nearly 1½ million have been displaced since the start of the crisis.

Our humanitarian coordinator, Brian Atwood, who just returned from the region, has described an elderly Albanian woman he met in a camp outside Tirana. She saw all the male members of her family and most of the men in her village rounded up by Serbian authorities, tied up, doused with gasoline, and set on fire in front of their families.

It's the kind of story that would be too horrible to believe if it were not so consistent with what so many other refugees have been saying. What we need to remember is that this is the result of a meticulously planned campaign, not an isolated incident of out-of-control rage, a campaign organized by the

Government of Belgrade for a specific political purpose, to maintain its grip over Kosovo by ridding the land of its people.

This policy must be defeated, and it will be defeated. That was the clear message of the NATO Summit. Nineteen democratically elected NATO leaders came together to demonstrate their unity and determination to prevail. We agreed to intensify the air campaign, and that is what NATO is doing, both against military targets in Kosovo and against the infrastructure of political and military power in Belgrade.

Our partners in southeastern Europe, the frontline states, who are risking so much and who have borne such a heavy burden, have followed through on their pledges of support. We are also providing more funds to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and to NGO's to deliver food and supplies to the refugees. Our Defense Department has found a site for the facility it will build in Albania for up to 20,000 refugees. We hope it will begin taking in refugees in about 2 weeks.

I spoke to Members of Congress about all these efforts today. I told them that now is the time to pass the supplemental funding for Kosovo that I requested 9 days ago. We need it to maintain our military readiness. Just as important, we need to sustain humanitarian relief and support for the frontline nations that have absorbed the brunt of this emergency.

Let me stress that my request fully funds our military and humanitarian needs in Kosovo. Congress should resist the temptation to add unrelated expenditures, even important ones, which could delay the process, because that would undermine the very goals that this funding is intended to meet. We must get a Kosovo funding measure passed and to my desk now.

We also talked about other legislative initiatives pending on Kosovo in the Congress. I stressed that the 19 NATO Allies are speaking with a single voice. America must continue to speak with a single voice as well. I told them we would welcome the support of the Congress so that Mr. Milosevic will have no doubt that we had the determination and the patience to persevere until we prevail.

Each day our military campaign takes a toll on Serbia's machinery of repression. The Serbian leadership has failed to divide us and will not outlast us. The combined military might and moral determination of Europe and North America will endure.

We know what the final outcome will be: The Serbian forces will leave Kosovo; an international security force will deploy to protect all the people there, Serbs as well as Albanians; and the refugees will return with security and self-government.

Thank you.

Q. Did you say you promised Congress you would ask permission——

NATO Strategy/Serbian Occupation of Kosovo

Q. [Inaudible]—how can you say the strategy is working when 40,000 troops remain in Kosovo?

Q. Mr. President, do you see any signs that Milosevic is losing his grip, sir? Any signs at all?

The President. We have some indications that there are differences of opinion, obviously, developing in Belgrade, and we saw some of it public this week. There are some things that we know that I think I should not comment on. But the thing I want to tell the American people is, we know, objectively, what damage has been done. We know now we're going to be in a position to fly around the clock at lower altitudes from all directions in better weather.

Historically, the weather is better in May than in April, better in June than in May, better in July than in June. And I feel very strongly that we should stay with and be very strong in determination to pursue our strategy, as well as the very important decisions we made at the NATO conference to intensify the economic pressure. And I believe that if we do these things, we will be successful.

I am determined to do it. I believe our Allies are all determined to do it. I think when they left here they were more determined than when they came.

As to the question the gentleman asked about the troops, keep in mind, the fact that they have mobilized more troops is an indication of the trouble they're having. If they had

no problems, they wouldn't need the troops. The initial state of play on the ground was they had 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo and nearly 300 tanks. So we always knew that if they were willing to take the bombing in the beginning, they could do what they have done. Now, we have to stay with it to reverse that, and we can, and we will if we stay with it. I'm determined to do that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks on Signing the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999

April 29, 1999

Thank you. Let me say, first of all, I thank Dr. Metts for being here, for giving us a first hand and concrete expression of what this bill will mean to the States of our country and to the local school districts. I thank the Members of Congress who have spoken: Senator Wyden, Senator Frist, Congressman Roemer, my old colleague, Congressman Castle.

We're delighted to have the Vermont education commissioner here, Marc Hull, along with Senator Jeffords and Senator Kennedy and a very large delegation of Republicans and Democrats from the United States Congress from the Senate and the House. I'd like to ask the Members of Congress just to stand so the rest of you will see how many people here worked on this bill.

You know, there have been days in the last few years when I'm not sure we could have gotten this many Members of Congress to agree that today is Thursday. [*Laughter*] This was a truly astonishing effort, and I want to thank them all.

I want to say, too, a special word of appreciation to Governor Carper, and a very profound thanks to Secretary Riley. He and I started, as I have told many people, working on education reform together 20 years ago this year. And over the last 20 years, we have done our best to sort out what we ought to do and how we ought to do it and where

the responsibility for what particular action ought to lie.

And I suppose, if I could put it into a sentence, I would say that insofar as possible, when it comes to the education of our children in kindergarten through 12th grade, the beginning of what should be done, should be done by the States. And "how" should be decided by the local districts, but basically, whenever possible, by the local principals and teachers and parents involved in the schools. That the Federal Government is called upon to meet the needs that States can't meet on their own, the needs of poor children, children with special needs, or to fill in the gaps when there are crying national needs unmet, and that when substantial Federal dollars are involved, it's okay for the Federal Government to say "what," too. But we should all be singing out of the same hymnal insofar as possible, and we should all remember that all education, in the schools at least, occurs in the classrooms, in the libraries, on the schoolyards, among the students and parents and principals.

I think it is quite remarkable to see the places where you're really seeing a turnaround, now, where you have high expectation, high standards, discipline, and genuine accountability for the students and the teachers and the principals. You also see a dramatic attempt to cut the cost of education where the money's being wasted and to increase the investment in education where more is needed.

One of the things I'm very proud of that Secretary Riley has done is, independent of this bill we're signing today, is to slash the paperwork burdens on State and local officials by well over 60 percent since he has been the Secretary of Education, while putting an even more ambitious agenda before the educators of America.

Now, the Founding Fathers understood that this would be a big debate; we'd always be having this debate. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want for bread." I may have liked that even more when I was Governor, but it still sounds pretty good to me. [*Laughter*]

But the Framers understood something else, too. They understood that the country